

MINUTES OF MEETING
DANIA BEACH CITY COMMISSION
VIRTUAL BUDGET WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2020 – 4:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Mayor Lewellen called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

Present:

Mayor:	Lori Lewellen
Vice-Mayor:	Lauren Odman
Commissioners:	Chickie Brandimarte Bill Harris Tamara James
City Manager:	Ana M. Garcia, ICMA-CM
City Attorney:	Thomas Ansbro
City Clerk:	Thomas Schneider

2. Presentation

City Manager Garcia noted the current budget is \$2 million less than the prior budget; this is a hybrid of a budget, including the General Fund and all of the other funds; we created a Sanitation Fund this year. We have also given a menu for capital projects and expenditures. In addition, we have set aside \$500,000 for the Commission to decide how they want to use it. We are still left with a \$20 million reserve, which is very healthy. She is recommending we take out a low-cost loan to finance a citywide lighting initiative and turn over meter reading to Smart Meter Reading. With the meter reading, we can enhance citywide Wi-Fi; we also have a couple new positions. This is a balanced budget and gives the Commission the opportunity to allocate an additional \$500,000.

Frank DiPaolo, Director of Finance, explained the budget proposes to use \$2 million in citywide reserves. There are many projects needing significant investments right now. The two big key projects we are looking to finance are the citywide lighting and meter reading. The interest rates are low; additionally, the other uses of fund balance are very necessary. Nothing in the budget is set in stone and we are here to work through which are the most important things.

He addressed the new positions to ensure we are not neglecting building maintenance and repairs, to ensure our facilities are in pristine condition. Also, a position in HR, an HR Generalist, to oversee changes in how we select our health benefits. The other position is Assistant Parks & Recreation Director; the Director needs help. There are a few other requests, approximately \$900,000 for Nyberg Swanson and seed money for the west wing of City Hall. This is a matter of putting a placeholder out there for the Commission to consider. Additionally, another \$43,000 for the Women's Club, which is not in the budget, for structural assessment. We need a few

more vehicles, some replacements, and a vehicle for the facilities supervisor and Community Development staff. We also need a dump truck, and a vehicle for the Deputy Director of Public Services. That total request is about \$175,000, which is not included in the budget. He addressed the FEMA funds that have not yet been received; those funds were supposed to replace Irma spent money, but that money has already been replaced by the City.

City Manager Garcia added we wanted to assess and move forward with the lighting assessment and master plans. We want to make sure the future is now, and those studies become actual tangible projects. This is the renaissance of Dania Beach, and after COVID, the recovery of Dania Beach. We want to see things done citywide, not piecemeal.

3. Discussion

Vice-Mayor Odman asked about the City Wi-Fi detail.

Finance Director DiPaolo referenced page 18, Capital Budget, and noted it is the water meter-reading project, a \$1.7 million dollar project, where citizens can monitor use in real time. The other benefit allows for flow measurement of the City's lines. Page 120 shows the capital improvement form, which includes citywide Wi-Fi.

Vice-Mayor Odman asked if the entire City would be getting the Wi-Fi.

Finance Director DiPaolo said the infrastructure with the water meter AMI system allows the opportunity to add on the Wi-Fi.

Commissioner James noted she spoke to the City Manager about citywide Wi-Fi a year ago. She questioned if this will be an amenity for residents as well and not just for water services, and the details of the cost.

Finance Director DiPaolo responded if we installed Wi-Fi only, it would be very expensive. This allows us to scale up with the water meters all connected to it. It will be blended in with the initial phase of the water meter reading system.

Commissioner James requested a cost estimate of City-owned facilities having the Wi-Fi benefit, including the beach.

Finance Director DiPaolo said we have that plan; he just spoke to a vendor and it is somewhere in the vicinity of \$40,000 for the outside areas of the parks. He noted we are working to upgrade the Wi-Fi capabilities at the beach.

City Manager Garcia added we are proposing to install the infrastructure to be able to expand the Wi-Fi if the Commission wants to do so.

Commissioner James understands the \$1.7 million is for the infrastructure, but she wants to do the project at one time and not wait two years down the road to add the Wi-Fi cost.

City Manager Garcia responded we could not go to step 2 until we do Phase I, the smart meter; we can come back mid-year with a cost.

Finance Director DiPaolo said we plan to spec out the Wi-Fi; we are taking this route because if we just want to install Wi-Fi only, there is cost for equipment as well as on ongoing costs with no revenue coming in. If we do it through the water funds, the cost savings of meter reading will pay for it.

City Manager Garcia added the \$80,000 we are spending would pay for itself.

Finance Director DiPaolo stated we are also looking at the first phase assessment; we can come back and look at where we need to fill in with coverage.

Commissioner Brandimarte said she was naïve enough to think that the Wi-Fi was something we were bringing back to our residents. She questioned why we could not put it in this budget since the budget is \$2 million less than the previous one.

City Manager Garcia explained we are putting in the infrastructure first to be able to get to the next step.

Commissioner Brandimarte felt there would not be follow-through.

City Manager Garcia stated we do follow through.

Vice-Mayor Odman commented if it were not followed through on, we would still get the benefit of the water meter reading; hopefully it will be followed through on. She imagines many cities are going in that direction; access to Wi-Fi has become a basic right.

Finance Director DiPaolo noted in talking with our consultant, the cost was initially \$1.7 million; they think it can be done for \$1.5 million. We already have a little extra funding built in, and the key is getting that infrastructure in for the water meters.

Commissioner James said she has an issue with an additional HR Generalist, and we do not have a secretary. For the position that was upgraded, additional money was budgeted for a Master's program. She is trying to figure out what the policy is. She would like to remove the Generalist position and would not support it at this time.

City Manager Garcia noted there have been challenges in the HR Department and we have not been doing the level of service we should have. The secretary was never really a secretary. We have been going over the needs of all the departments; this is to take our work force to new heights. The new HR Director has saved a considerable amount of money and this does not happen without the right training.

Vice-Mayor Odman said she does not understand the need for the position yet; however, she understands files were not where they should be. She questioned what the HR Director needs that they do not have now.

Linda Gonzalez, Human Resources Director, addressed the health benefits savings and enhancements to our benefits. She described the duties of the two HR Generalists and noted the need for a Generalist to focus on various areas such as employee training programs. She also described the Risk Management deficiencies. We just brought self-service to employees as well as an electronic benefits system. We do not have an onboarding program where employees are oriented nor an internship program; there is so much more we can do besides process paper. She noted the tuition reimbursement is for HR Generalist March, and explained the tuition program for employees. We now have a very basic HR Department that processes paper.

Vice-Mayor Odman noted we had an internship program under the prior HR Director and Commissioner Harris still has an intern. There were some problems such as it not being posted at all the right universities. Some of the things Human Resources Director Gonzalez mentioned were things we had already been doing. She agreed maybe they have not done well and this could be from not having the right person.

Human Resources Director Gonzalez commented we do not want to do anything partially, and she would like to focus on training, recruitment, and compensation. There are a lot of complaints, such as no CDL driver testing and a huge backlog of filing of ten years. A lot of systems need to be improved, such as Neogov and New World; we do not have a timekeeping system which is a potential violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Commissioner James said she knows we have consultants; she does not know that three positions need to be Generalists. She cannot foresee supporting three people with the same exact title.

Human Resources Director Gonzalez explained titles are kind of a meaningless thing and described the specialty areas of focus: Talent Coordinator, Risk Coordinator and Compensation Coordinator. You want to have a specialist in each of these areas.

City Manager Garcia added we have an opportunity to groom those people; after this dialogue, she would support and recommend bringing in an assistant. We want to make sure we are evolving as a City and that starts with personnel.

Commissioner James recommended we bring in an HR assistant who could do some of the jobs needed and in the next budget year, we make another assessment.

Commissioner Brandimarte questioned who would be qualified to deal with OSHA.

Human Resources Director Gonzalez replied it is handled between the experience we have in the department and legal experts.

Mayor Lewellen said experience, education, and cross training is important.

Commissioner James noted she would like to add the HR Assistant position to the mid-year budget.

The Commission consensus was to bring the HR Assistant position back at the mid-year budget.

Mayor Lewellen requested discussion on the \$500,000 set aside for the Commission's use.

Commissioner James said \$250,000 for bridge design is in the budget; the community did not want it after holding community meetings. If we want to enhance the bridge we already have, that is fine, but she would not support this project.

Vice-Mayor Odman noted you have to have community meetings to find out what the feeling is about the bridge now.

City Manager Garcia said this project was inherited. Staff takes their priorities from the Commission; maybe the public dialogue is beneficial.

Vice-Mayor Odman said she does not know what can be done. It was a very hot topic three years ago, and now this project is back on the hotplate.

Finance Director DiPaolo gave background on why this is in the budget. This was a project on the list submitted to the MPO; it is on the City's MPO Plan. The \$480,000 plan that is being paid for by the surtax would also include community input.

Commissioner Harris said he is sure it is on the project list for 2026. In the event of an evacuation, it would be one more street to get people out of the east; currently, we only have the 1st Street Bridge to get everyone out. It could be an integral part of the development they see on Bryan Road.

Commissioner Brandimarte noted she was on the Commission when this was discussed; the Casino was also going to kick in. Commissioner Harris is right; we only have one exit out of the City now, but we were not footing the bill. She does not understand the community being against it; only five homes are over there. Perhaps it would affect Saratoga Crossings.

Fernando Rodriguez, Director of Public Services, stated it would not affect them. He is aware of only five homes over there.

Commissioner James said there are at least four or five homes before the PATCH. The neighborhood is still against it, and she will support what the neighborhood wants. Those are long-time residents. She would not put it in budget without having heard from the community. This can wait; she knows the temperature of that community. With this \$250,000, we can do more meaningful programs in the time of COVID instead of talking about displacing people.

City Manager Garcia noted we have six years to discuss this project.

Mayor Lewellen confirmed the MPO has been doing funding for this; part of what they would do to move forward is to have community meetings. She questioned whether MPO is relying on us to fund certain things in order to move forward.

Commissioner Harris said we need more information on this; he could have more information by September or have the MPO Chair speak to the Commission.

Mayor Lewellen said there is also County input on this; they may vote on something separate. We do need more information on this; she would like to know what the plan is for the year and whether this is required for us to have in our budget. If it does not need to be addressed, then we can take it out of the budget. She added she does not think the controversy is as strong as it was in the past.

Director of Public Services Rodriguez noted sometimes a design phase is critical in a timeline.

Vice-Mayor Odman said it could be kept in with an asterisk, but she would like to pull it.

Commissioner James disagreed we only have one exit out of the City. She noted we have several and listed them; that argument is null and void. She knows we do not have to allocate money for a design phase and questioned why we would include this in the budget. She does not like how resolutions are written, like the 2019 MPO resolution. She would like to pull this as the last time we spoke to the people, they did not want it. Saratoga has a lot of families, kids, and elderly, and we have another Saratoga proposed. This would be another major thoroughfare going through a neighborhood.

Commissioner Brandimarte felt this item should be pulled.

City Manager Garcia said she hears the consensus; she did not know of all the issues. We will go back and have a dialogue with the MPO.

Commissioner Harris agreed with Commissioner James; with Saratoga coming, he does not want to create a thoroughfare, and recommends further investigation into this.

The Commission consensus was to remove this budget item.

Finance Director DiPaolo noted this is Cycle 1 of the surtax money. Sales tax is being affected negatively due to COVID, and projects 2-3 years out are in jeopardy.

City Manager Garcia suggested we could switch it out with another project.

Commissioner Brandimarte questioned why Eric Brown, Director of Parks & Recreation, needs an assistant at this time. We are not doing anything and she recommended waiting six months to bring this back.

City Manager Garcia noted one of the most active departments during COVID is Parks & Recreation; we run all of these facilities as well as the beach and we now have beach

ambassadors. Parks one of the largest departments; if we run someone down without giving them that support, it is a disservice to all the service and product we want to put out.

Commissioner Brandimarte asked if we would be promoting from within or bringing in someone from North Miami Beach.

Director of Parks & Recreation Brown noted when he got to Dania Beach, there were many things that needed accomplishing. A position of this caliber should be worldwide; we need to go out and make sure we bring the best candidate in whether it is in-house or outside the City.

Commissioner Brandimarte commented no one is being promoted from within and asked why Parks & Recreation could not promote from within.

Director of Parks & Recreation Brown noted we promoted three employees within the last year.

Commissioner Brandimarte said the parks are not even open; we are not doing anything for our residents here.

Mayor Lewellen commented she thinks we have posted the positions; people have applied from within and outside. To limit ourselves to only people in the City is not the policy we have been following. This will be someone working with Parks & Recreation Director Brown; he needs to make that decision ultimately.

Parks & Recreation Director Brown said he will have been here two years; he has assessed all of the employees and described the changes made. He would not like to promote someone without the experience and knowledge. We do not want to put staff in positions that will ultimately cause their demise and fail; rather we want them to succeed.

Commissioner James commented she knows the City sometimes has positions that they post only internally. She asked if the Athletic Director position is being eliminated.

Parks & Recreation Director Brown responded the Superintendent is the Athletic Director. He will put the positions in the right place so as the City grows, Parks and Recreation will be well suited.

Commissioner James noted we really did not have much of a Parks & Recreation program when she got to the Commission. Whatever department it is, you should be able to be out for two weeks and the department not fail. We cannot really house our Parks & Recreation staff, and with COVID, she does not know the value of the Parks Master Plan. As our department grows, we do need to think about where we are going to house the staff. The Southwest Community Center is highly underutilized for programs; perhaps use it all for staff. Whatever we are doing with the position, if we are to operate at a high level, we need a centralized location.

City Manager Garcia gave examples of assistants rising when the department head is absent. She agreed we may wait until January to fill the position. We do need space, but we need to evolve to be what we can be.

Mayor Lewellen noted the Parks Department has been extremely busy during COVID; a lot of emergency orders have been issued that have impacted Parks & Recreation.

Parks & Recreation Director Brown said his motto is we do not watch it happen, we make it happen. Regarding space, he described the SW Community Center and noted we are preparing for an Assistant Director in that space. He addressed the activity of the department during COVID, and emphasized we need to look at a foundation for Parks & Recreation.

Commissioner Brandimarte noted the shortage of Parks staff at the IT Parker Center. The department needs workers, and she needs more than one person for her Seniors Club.

City Manager Garcia said an assessment on staffing can be made among her, the Director, and the Assistant Director.

Commissioner Brandimarte repeated there needs to be more workers during her functions.

City Manager Garcia said an admin is no longer an admin; if we need to bring in an admin to support her operation, we will cross-train.

Parks & Recreation Director Brown noted just before COVID, we hired a person for IT Parker; he is on board and cannot wait to get back.

Commissioner Brandimarte said she wants the same respect as that given to CW Thomas Park regarding staffing.

City Manager Garcia noted the individual to support her is now a beach ambassador.

Commissioner Brandimarte questioned the \$7,000 balance she had in her Seniors Club budget when COVID came and the doors were locked.

Commissioner James said City of Hollywood funds did not go back into the General Fund, but rolled over. She wants to see if it is possible to allow an account that the funding would be there. If so, she would like to have an account for the other programs that the funds do not go back to the General Fund.

Parks & Recreation Director Brown explained the Fund 11 account in Hollywood. General Fund monies did not roll over in a Fund 11 account; the money had to be spent within that fiscal year.

Commissioner Brandimarte requested she not be given that \$7000; she just wants to know if she goes over the amount that it will be covered.

Finance Director DiPaolo said none of the General Fund money rolls over; it has to be spent within that year. Sponsorships could be rolled over if a special account is set up.

City Manager Garcia noted we should have been clearer; it would be the rest of the fiscal year. There could be funds that could be accepted and could be rolled over.

Commissioner James asked how much is left in the budget for Gracefully Aging and the Seniors. She would like an exception made because of COVID and tag that money onto next year's allocation.

Commissioner Brandimarte felt Director of Parks & Recreation could cover if she went over budget because of COVID.

Parks & Recreation Director Brown noted Commissioner Brandimarte could still purchase her items before the fiscal year is out.

City Manager Garcia said due to the new Styrofoam ordinance, if Commissioner Brandimarte needs to make some adjustments, we can have that discussion.

Parks & Recreation Director Brown noted if Commissioner Brandimarte wanted to make changes to get rid of plastics, Parks & Recreation is working seven days per week, and he would help her with what she needs to establish.

Commissioner James said she would volunteer to help Commissioner Brandimarte change out the plastic.

City Manager Garcia noted we could encumber the funds so she can get them next year.

Vice-Mayor Odman said the Commission wanted to try to avoid in this upcoming year where people come up to the dais and ask for money. She thought they all agreed it was not the best thing to do; they wanted to agree upon a number and that is all that could be spent for the year.

Commissioner James commented some of these organizations are not to be seen when we are going through a hardship. There are organizations that do step up and we need to support them. She does not agree with the process and how it is done. She wants it to get away from the hands of the Commission so it will not be so political; perhaps through an advisory board. She wants to make sure we are doing it in the best possible way. She would like to see people stay on a board longer than the next election. We really need to supplement people who are working tirelessly, without a thank you.

Vice-Mayor Odman noted the first part of the process is finding out the best practice.

City Manager Garcia said after the workshop, the Commission can give staff a number. She recommended a grant advisory board and that an amount is set; charities could make a presentation to the board.

Mayor Lewellen would like to find out how other cities do it; there are a number of cities that do not even do charitable donations. It should not be a huge amount of money. Also, instead of

doing a number of charities, perhaps take one or two who would get a larger amount of money, and each year do another two. We need to look into it more.

Commissioner James said the amount we give to the Library is not that much. She knows a lot of organizations do not have the overhead, and knows that \$2,000 would be very helpful. She would not want to just fund them one year. Perhaps we decide on the amount for now and come back later; she is open to any ideas on how it would be set up. Other cities use CDBG funds. At least we could come up with an amount as a placeholder and we can come up with the logistics later.

Finance Director DiPaolo cautioned from an oversight perspective, we are looking at a policy of how we give money. The same consequences we have for procurement, we would have for charitable donations. This is taxpayers' money and the Commission wants to be sure as they proceed to a policy that it is not open to scrutiny, that it is fair, and reflects the City's mission on how it operates.

Vice-Mayor Odman asked if an independent grant committee would be better.

Finance Director DiPaolo said he does not know; once we establish a policy, then we can proceed with protocol.

City Manager Garcia said the legitimacy of these organizations does not need to come back to haunt us.

City Attorney Ansbro noted under the former administration, there was a committee, but people came and asked, and the process eroded.

Commissioner James said she liked what the Finance Director and City Attorney said. She asked if there were any legal issues in the past.

City Attorney Ansbro said they were always good organizations, but now we have the OIG scrutiny.

Commissioner James has no problem with it as we are providing assistance to our residents through non-profits. She questioned if we should say only Dania Beach; then they would be the partnerships we have.

City Manager Garcia said we need to do the research, working with Legal and Finance, to align ourselves with best practices and in the application, check off everything so we follow best practices.

Commissioner Brandimarte spoke of Brother Mac; he has proven himself and is worthy.

Finance Director DiPaolo said the Commission should focus on things the funds are being utilized on as to whether it is something that the City would provide normally. If it augments the City's existing services, then that is something to look into going forward making decisions.

Commissioner James referenced the west wing renovation of City Hall; maybe we could take some of that money to improve the SW Community Center and Parks staffing.

Mayor Lewellen questioned the status of the west wing.

City Manager Garcia said it is clean, but not ADA compliant; the first thing is to make it ADA compliant. There is 2,500 square feet of space. We can certainly augment the SW Community Center.

Commissioner James suggested maybe using some funding to make it ADA compliant, the restrooms, etc., and use left over money for the SW Community Center.

Vice-Mayor Odman noted she would like to have offices for all the Commissioners in the west wing, and she described how it works now. We are professionals and we should each have our own small, reasonable place. The first step would be to make it ADA compliant.

City Manager Garcia agreed and with 2,500 square feet, various options are available.

Commissioner Harris agreed we should move forward with the ADA compliance, and questioned having the PAL program situated in the west wing.

City Manager Garcia said the more she thinks about it, the kids should be separate. She spoke of space behind the parking garage and the PAL space being there.

Commissioner James noted she supports the PAL program, but not in the west wing, and supports Vice-Mayor Odman's idea. Maybe the existing conference room could be repurposed or be a dual purpose room in the future.

City Manager Garcia agreed the second floor should be ADA compliant and for executive offices.

Finance Director DiPaolo said there is money in the current budget that could be used for the ADA assessment.

Commissioner James noted she saw Citywide Christmas Décor, and listed amounts showing under Parks and under City. She said the RFP estimate was \$50,000. It says citywide; she wants to see what the funding encompasses as it looks like it is not encompassing what the CRA is doing.

City Manager Garcia said it should read Holiday Décor, not Christmas. We want to make an impact on the major thoroughfares.

Commissioner James wanted to know what it encompasses.

City Manager Garcia said it is a limited amount and it is seed money.

Mayor Lewellen noted we discussed this and questioned whether we want to add more money to this; just on the main thoroughfares and get a company that will do it all.

Commissioner James agreed we need to do year-round, but she knows it would be much more than \$50,000.

City Manager Garcia said it is just seed money; we were going to accessorize by doing our parks.

Vice-Mayor Odman asked if we could add more money to that; especially this year and what an amazing gift we could give to the residents.

Commissioner James asked what it encompassed last year that the CRA handled.

CRA Director Williams explained the RFP encompassed Federal Highway from Old Griffin down to Sheridan, and Dania Beach Boulevard. At budget time, we reduced it to just the City Center to include the tree. The budget proposal was \$50,000, then during budget discussion, it went down to \$7,500, with no Christmas tree, only palm trees decorated, menorah, kinara, and wreath.

City Manager Garcia said what the CRA was going to do was \$50,000, so if we added another \$50,000, it would make it \$100,000 to expand the efforts.

Finance Director DiPaolo explained the budget request is \$25,000 for Parks and Recreation for the tree and menorah lighting. With the \$53,000 from Public Services, that is \$78,000 total, so \$22,000 would need to be added to make it \$100,000.

Commissioner James wants to be sure it is the Commission's vision.

Vice-Mayor Odman noted it is impossible to get decorations from the beach to 441. Each year, we could add funds to build it up for a citywide impact.

City Manager Garcia stated we need to build it up over time; \$100,000 is a good start.

Commissioner James wants an art component, maybe art in public places, to induce art back into the City.

City Manager Garcia agreed with utilizing art in public places so contractors can help with the City's efforts to augment the cost.

The Commission consensus was \$100,000.00 allocation to start with Christmas decor.

Mayor Lewellen noted she had ideas for the \$500,000 allocated to the Commission. We need to look at the IT Parker Center; there is a lot more that could be done with this building, particularly with regard to the water space. Secondly, since we do have the Parks Master Plan that passed, it might be a good idea to take that money and improve a smaller park for a showcase park; her

thought is Chester Byrd Park. We could say this is what we want to do and persuade people to support a bond issue.

Vice-Mayor Odman questioned whether the Commission needed to do a second workshop regarding the \$500,000.

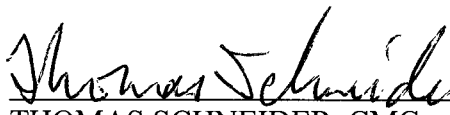
Discussion ensued regarding the date of the second workshop.

Commissioner James felt a CRA budget workshop was needed, and said she would have Director Williams contact everyone.

4. Adjournment


Mayor Lewellen adjourned the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

ATTEST:


THOMAS SCHNEIDER, CMC
CITY CLERK



CITY OF DANIA BEACH


LORI LEWELLEN
MAYOR

Approved: September 14, 2020